



## Supporting school gardening projects

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Developing Positive Minds & Healthy  
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# KNOW YOUR VEG Discover potatoes



Potatoes

Here's the chance for you to discover some of the basic facts about the Potato as well as some essential growing tips. Use these to decide whether you want to grow the vegetable, whether you are able to and what you need to do or look out for in order to grow a bountiful crop!

**Other names:** Solanum Tuberosum

**Appearance:** Can be in yellow, red or white colours; oval, round or kidney shaped

**Popular varieties:** Accent (waxy early potato) and Charlotte (waxy main crop potato)

**Interesting fact:** Originated from Peru, South America and brought to the UK in the 15th century

**Nutritional value:** Carbohydrates, minerals, fibre and vitamins

**When to grow:** Early to late spring in either the garden, containers or pots. Two types of potato - early (new) potatoes that grow quickly and maincrop potatoes that take longer to grow.

**Grown from:** Seed potatoes that come in small bags that are sprouted before being planted into the ground

**Likes:** Deep, fertile and well drained soil in a sunny site; warm soil in the early days of growing; during growing having soil up and around them to kill weeds and prevent disease and frost; watering in dry periods

**Dislikes:** Frost; water-logged or light soil; growing in the same spot year after year; weevil and potato beetle

**Harvest time:** Early potatoes when they begin to flower in purple just 3 months after planting; maincrop potatoes in late summer

**cooking tips:** Eat raw, in salads, boil or steam them before serving with a meal

# Essential Growing Tips for potatoes



Potatoes

- Choose from 3 types of potatoes:
  - First earlies that take about 14-16 weeks from growing to harvesting
  - Second earlies that take about 16-17 weeks from growing to harvesting
  - Maincrops that take about 18-20 weeks from growing to harvesting.
- All potatoes should be chitted - this means allowing seed potatoes to sprout before planting. Put the seed potatoes in a single layer in a box or use egg cartons. Put the ends with most eyes facing upwards. Leave in a light place. Shoots will appear within 6 weeks.
- Potatoes can be grown in containers. See our spud tubs and potato barrels that are both capable of producing a bountiful crop. A 30cm (12 inch) container is big enough to plant two tubers.
- Potatoes are ideal for new vegetable plots. They help to break up the ground. Dig in compost or manure the autumn before planting.
- Potatoes like moist soil.
- Plant early tubers about 10/12 cm (4/5") deep and 30cm (12") apart in rows 60cm (24") apart. Later potatoes should be planted further apart 38cm (15") in rows 75cm (30") apart..
- When the leaves and stems are about 30cm (12") high, the potatoes need to be earthed up. This means using a hoe to pull up soil around the stems. Lower leaves can be buried, but leave the tops of the plants uncovered. This stops tubers near the surface turning green and becoming poisonous.
- If frost is forecast, cover early potatoes with a fleece. This warms up the soil like a cloche, allows rain to penetrate and protects from a degree or two of frost. It also creates a barrier against flying insect pests in early spring.
- Blight is the main problem. Look out for first signs of blackened leaves and remove immediately. Burn infected foliage.
- Early potatoes should be dug up when they start to flower. Later potatoes can be harvested when the foliage dies down.

For further information call 0845 402 5300, or visit  
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